



# GAMA PROGRAM

## VOLUNTARY DOMESTIC WELL ASSESSMENT PROJECT

### STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD



*...providing water quality data to domestic well owners...*

#### GOAL

In an effort to assess water quality and relative susceptibility of groundwater resources, as well as to provide the domestic well owner with specific information regarding domestic well water quality, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is implementing the Voluntary Domestic Well Assessment Project.

#### OVERVIEW

The California Legislature, and Governor, as well as private citizens have become increasingly concerned about the recent public supply well closures due to the detection of chemicals, such as MTBE from gasoline and various solvents from industrial sources. As a result of the increased awareness toward ground water quality, the SWRCB created Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment (GAMA) Program. The GAMA Program has two components: the California Aquifer Susceptibility (CAS) Assessment which addresses public supply drinking water wells and the Voluntary Domestic Well Assessment Project which addresses private drinking water wells.

Currently, there is no comprehensive statewide program that regulates the water quality of domestic drinking water wells. As a result, the quality of domestic well water in California is largely unknown. Other states with domestic well sampling programs have found constituents, such as MTBE, present in domestic wells.

The Voluntary Domestic Well Assessment Project will sample domestic wells for various constituents commonly found in domestic well water and provide that information to the domestic well owners. In addition, the Voluntary Domestic Well Assessment Project will include a public education component to aid the public in understanding water quality data and water quality issues affecting domestic water wells.

#### SCOPE

The Voluntary Domestic Well Assessment Project will focus on specific areas, as resources permit. The focus areas will be chosen based upon existing

knowledge of water quality and land use, in coordination with local environmental agencies.

#### SAMPLING & ANALYSIS

SWRCB staff will collect samples from domestic wells then contract with a certified laboratory to provide analysis. Prior to sampling, each well will be accurately located using Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers. Sampling will be conducted using methods to ensure the collection of a sample that is representative of the water being used by the public. Samples will be collected at a well access point or from a household water tap. General constituents to be sampled are shown in Table 1. Additional constituents may be chosen based upon specific information regarding regional hydrogeology or land use. For example, domestic wells that are in the vicinity of mining waste may be sampled for arsenic, based on potential water quality impacts. Domestic wells that are part of a site investigation or remediation monitoring program being conducted by a responsible party under State regulatory oversight will not be sampled as part of the Voluntary Domestic Well Assessment Project.

**Table 1.** General constituents to be sampled for at domestic wells.

Constituent
Total and Fecal Coliform
General Minerals (e.g. Nitrate, Sodium, Bicarbonate)
Inorganics (e.g. Lead, Arsenic)
Organics (e.g. MTBE, PCE, TCE)

The SWRCB will incur the costs of sampling and analysis, and the results will be provided to domestic well owners as quickly as possible.

#### QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The SWRCB is very interested in your input regarding the Voluntary Domestic Well Assessment Project. For further information please contact Carol Julian via telephone at (916) 341-5858 or via email at [julianc@cwpswrcb.ca.gov](mailto:julianc@cwpswrcb.ca.gov).